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From: Shore, Berry
Sent: Mon 11/14/2016 1:44:03 PM
Subject: POFA/PFOS Clips

Rensselaer County legislators ask for Hoosick Falls cleanup to be federal priority

By Nicholas Buonanno

Posted: 11/13/16, 1:51 PM EST | Updated: 8 hrs ago

Troy Record

TROY >> Members of the Rensselaer County Legislature unanimously approved a resolution at their monthly meeting last week they hope will help speed up the cleanup of a site in Hoosick Falls that has been identified as the source of a suspected cancer-causing substance that was found in dangerously high levels in public and private water supplies.

The resolution, which was introduced by the Legislature's chairman, Stan Brownell, calls for the inclusion of Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics' McCaffrey Street plant on the federal Superfund National Priorities List and for adequate funding and a timeline to ensure progress of the cleanup.

State and federal officials have identified the plant as the source of perfluorooctanoic acid, a synthetic substance used in the manufacturing of non-stick cookware, dental floss, electrical insulation, fabrics and other products, that was found in both the village water system and private wells in the village and town of Hoosick. Chronic exposure has been linked to testicular cancer, kidney cancer, thyroid disease, high cholesterol, ulcerative colitis and pregnancy-induced hypertension. Studies suggest other possible health consequences, including a connection to pancreatic cancer. The substance has been affecting residents of Hoosick Falls and Petersburg for more than a year now.

"This is an important property in Hoosick Falls, and inclusion on the federal National Priorities List will help restore the property and resolve some of the concerns residents have regarding the PFOA situation," said Brownell. "We also have asked the federal government to provide a specific timeline for this important remediation work. A clear and direct line of communication with residents on this project, and continued progress,

are needed to restore confidence and trust.”

Brownell said he wants cleanup work to begin in Hoosick Falls as soon as possible.

“There have been numerous other instances nationally and even locally where federal Superfund projects have been delayed and progress has been stingy,” said Brownell. “We want to avoid those kinds of delays in Hoosick Falls.”

The county Legislature recently approved a resolution asking for establishment of a dedicated website to inform residents about the project and for adequate federal funding for the remediation and protection of public water supplies. Brownell also authored a detailed letter to the federal Environmental Protection Agency supporting inclusion of the property on the priorities list.

“We are proud to lend our voice to the many residents and advocates who have been working for a cleanup and a remedy to this situation,” said Brownell.

The resolution, along with the letter to the EPA, adopted at the board’s Nov. 9 legislative meeting, will be sent to federal officials.

Company takes responsibility for PFOA contamination in Petersburg

By Nicholas Buonanno

Posted: 11/11/16, 11:18 AM EST | Updated: 1 day ago

Troy Record

Photo: Bottled water for distribution to town residents is piled up in February inside the Petersburg Municipal Complex after high levels of a suspected cancer-causing substance was discovered in public and private water supplies in the town.

Bottled water for distribution to town residents is piled up in February inside the Petersburg Municipal Complex after high levels of a suspected cancer-causing

substance was discovered in public and private water water supplies in the town. The Associated Press

PETERSBURGH >> A local manufacturer has officially taken responsibility for the contamination of public and private town water supplies and pledged to continue its efforts to address the problem.

According to a news release from the company, Taconic Inc. has voluntarily entered into a consent order with the state Department of Environmental Conservation to continue ongoing efforts to identify and address the contamination of water supplies in the vicinity of the company's plant on Coon Brook Road with perfluorooctanoic acid, a reputed cancer-causing substance. The company said the order was mutually agreed upon and provides a framework for Taconic's ongoing work to move forward.

"Taconic remains committed to continued cooperation with the [DEC and] the town of Petersburg, as well as its partnership with Rensselaer County," the news release states.

Tests by the state Health Department earlier this year detected significant levels of PFOA in samples of both raw and treated water in the town's water system. While the samples were slightly below the level at which the federal Environmental Protection Agency recommended residents in nearby Hoosick Falls not drink water contaminated with the same chemical, Petersburg officials decided to take action "out of an abundance of caution."

Some studies have linked PFOA to certain types of cancer, and the EPA is considering regulating it under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Taconic was quickly identified as the most likely source of the contamination, and the company quickly agreed to take steps to address the problem.

Before signing the consent order, company officials said they have already taken several steps to address the contamination, including the installation of treatment systems for 65 town homes or business, working to design a larger treatment system for the town's municipal water system and providing bottled water for all town residents.

PFOA is a synthetic substance used in the manufacture of non-stick cookware, dental floss, electrical insulation, fabrics and other products. Chronic exposure has been linked to testicular cancer, kidney cancer, thyroid disease, high cholesterol, ulcerative colitis and pregnancy-induced hypertension. Studies suggest other possible health consequences, including a connection to pancreatic cancer.

The contamination in Petersburg came several weeks after similar contamination was confirmed in wells that supply the public water system in nearby Hoosick Falls, as well as nearby private wells. In that case, state and federal regulators identified Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics as the likely source of the contamination, and that company signed a similar consent order and agreed to pay for the installation of a carbon filtration system at the village's treatment plant, as well as smaller systems for affected homes and business with private water supplies.

NYSDEC Announces Agreement To Address Petersburg Contamination

By Lucas Willard

Nov 12, 2016

WAMC NE Public Radio

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has entered an agreement to hold company Taconic responsible for removing the chemical PFOA from water supplies in the Rensselaer County community of Petersburg.

DEC announced the voluntary Order on Consent with Taconic Thursday night. The state will install additional point-of-entry treatment systems on private wells to remove the chemical PFOA. The state is offering POET systems to all who ask and will seek reimbursement from Taconic.

Taconic will install and maintain a filtration system on the municipal water supply and on private wells impacted by PFOA concentrations above the EPA advisory level.

The chemical that has been linked to ill-health effects has also been found in water supplies in nearby Hoosick Falls, where buildings owned by company Saint-Gobain have been recommended for Federal Superfund Status.

Pownal officials frustrated by efforts to find new water source

by Jim Therrien

Nov. 10, 2016, 1:44 pm

VTDigger.com

POWNAL — Pownal Fire District 2 board members expressed frustration this week over the search for an alternative water source to replace the district's current well, which was found to contain PFOA contamination last spring.

The board met with managers hired by a company associated with the suspected source of the perfluorooctanoic acid — the nearby former Warren Wire Co. factory — to deal with ongoing water filtering and develop a new water source. In the meeting, board members pressed for a speedier long-term solution.

District board Secretary-Treasurer Sharon Nichols and others also called for Unicorn Management Consultants — hired by American Premier Underwriters, of Cincinnati — to promptly approve payment of overdue water district bills they believe are related to the PFOA contamination.

American Premier Underwriters has agreed to pay for a granular activated filtering system now installed at the wellhead off Route 346 just south of the former factory building. It has also agreed to cover other intermediate costs, like bottled water for residents and filters on private wells in the area with levels of PFOA higher than the state accepted level of 20 parts per trillion.

The water system serves about 450 customers in the south Pownal area, roughly between Route 7 and Route 346.

Michael O'Connor, of Unicorn Management, told board members Monday that the firm is seeking additional proposals from engineering firms to act as consultant in the search for a new well site, having received only one proposal rather than the preferred three.

After the meeting, O'Connor said he could provide no firm timetable for the search process, which does not involve seeking bids but soliciting proposals from engineering firms licensed to perform that work in Vermont. At this point, only Otter Creek Engineering of Rutland has supplied a proposal.

Mark Youngstrom, of Otter Creek Engineering, also attended the district board meeting. He said Tuesday: "I designed the entire water system currently serving Pownal Fire District No. 2 when I was with my previous firm Wright Engineering, also out of Rutland. That work included locating, testing and permitting the existing 100 gallon per minute well on Route 346, as well as the water distribution system and the storage tank, and the administration assistance of forming the fire district and obtaining the funding to construct the system."

District board members indicated Monday they would favor having Youngstrom and Otter Creek work with the district to locate an uncontaminated water source.

Youngstrom said his firm has some areas in mind where it would look first for a suitable site, but he noted a number of criteria must be met, including access and landowner cooperation.

State officials have said it typically takes about 18 months to identify and develop an acceptable new source of water for a public system.

Youngstrom noted that what was then known as the Pownal Water Co., and privately owned, was previously served by a small reservoir and had an aging network of water

lines and no filtration or treatment system for disinfection. The system was turned over to the newly formed fire district during the 1990s, and a well site was located in an open field off Route 346.

Board members also expressed frustration over the pace of reimbursement from Unicorn Management for water system expenses they believe are related to the PFOA contamination. Those include new chlorination equipment required because of the carbon filtering system, which can harbor bacteria and wasn't previously a factor for the district.

Nichols and others argued with O'Connor over several maintenance, contractor service call or other expenses they believe American Premier Underwriters should cover because they all relate to the PFOA contamination. O'Connor contended that some of the expenses are likely the responsibility of the fire district.

O'Connor said he would refer the disputed bills to Unicorn Management's owner, Francisco Trejo. Board members said they also hope to arrange a meeting with Trejo.

Asked about the state's role in monitoring efforts to resolve the water contamination issues, Danika Frisbie of the Agency of Natural Resources, said Tuesday: "APU agreed to cover a set of costs for a drinking water solution for Fire District No. 2, and there are evolving costs associated with maintaining that system. The state is committed to continuing to work with local officials and representatives from Unicorn Management Consultants find a solution moving forward."

While APU has agreed to cover certain expenses in the process, state officials have said the firm has not accepted liability for the contamination.

In the spring, after PFOA contamination was discovered near factories in Hoosick and Petersburg, New York, and in the North Bennington area, the state tested the Pownal well and nearly 100 private wells in Pownal and North Pownal. Most showed no detectable amounts of PFOA, while seven had levels above the Vermont limit and 12 had levels below 20 parts per trillion.

Vermont issued a no-drink order for the water district in March, after levels of PFOA above the state's limit of 20 parts per trillion were detected. Water was found to have levels of 26 and 27 parts per trillion. However, by late July the granular activated carbon filter system, which includes large steel tanks, was installed near the wellhead and the no-drink order was lifted.

The filtering system is expected to remain in place until a new water source can be brought online.

Warren Wire Co. started operating at the 10-acre industrial site, which is roughly 1,000 feet from the wellhead, in 1948. The factory was subsequently sold to General Cable Co., which later became known as GK Technologies Inc. That firm was purchased in 1981 by a holding company for the Pennsylvania Central Corp.

According to state officials, APU took on the building's environmental liabilities after the site was sold to the current owner, Mack Molding, which has primarily used it as a warehouse.

The chemical PFOA, which was used in wire coatings and in consumer products and packaging, is suspected to have a link to cancers and other diseases, but the results of scientific studies thus far have differed.

New York wants residents of upstate town to seek blood tests after toxin found in water

Sunday, November 13, 2016, 11:51 PM

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Residents of a Hudson Valley city already struggling with poverty and urban blight are now being told to have their blood tested for a toxic chemical long used for firefighting at the nearby air base.

Newburgh's water supply was switched to an alternate source in May after the chemical PFOS was found above federal guidelines.

Now, the state Health Department has launched a blood testing program.

Similar testing has been done in several smaller communities, such as rural Hoosick Falls. But Newburgh's population of 28,000 is eight times the size of Hoosick Falls and the city has a high percentage of poor, non-English-speaking residents, making outreach challenging

Federal PFOA Limit Panned By State Scientists

By Sara Jerome

November 14, 2016

Water Online

Public officials at the federal and state level appear increasingly far from a consensus on safe levels of perfluorinated acid (PFOA) in drinking water.

That is perhaps most apparent in the standoff between New Jersey drinking water regulators and federal scientists.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Drinking Water Quality Institute recently unveiled details on its PFOA outlook in a PowerPoint. The institute is a state-appointed group of researchers that makes recommendations for water contaminant limits in New Jersey.

The PowerPoint panned the 70 ppt advisory limit for PFOA set by the U.S. EPA, according to The Intelligencer.

“It cannot be concluded that exposure to (70 ppt) is protective of the most sensitive populations with a margin of exposure,” the PowerPoint said.

Here’s what that means, per The Intelligencer: “The amount of PFOA the EPA says is safe for millions of Americans to consume in drinking water actually is not, according to the institute.”

“If the institute is correct, the implications are massive. PFOA and PFOS have been found in the drinking water supplies upon which millions of Americans rely,” the report continued.

“If the institute’s criticism is correct, it would mean the EPA’s 70-ppt level is five times less protective of cancer risks than typical standards call for,” it said.

“Through a review of available research, the New Jersey water institute determined that drinking water contaminated with PFOA will lead to anywhere from a 100- to 200-fold increase of the chemical in human blood, depending on the exact study and how much water an individual consumed on a regular basis. In other words, drinking water with 10 ppt, after some period in time, would lead to at least 1,000 ppt in a human’s blood,” it continued.

The Institute offered a critique of the EPA limit, per the report:

- The EPA didn’t account for possible health effects — such as liver toxicity, delayed development and decreased immune response — that may occur at low levels of exposure.
- The EPA underestimated the cancer risk of the chemical.
- The EPA’s advisory doesn’t adequately protect women who plan to become pregnant.
- The EPA came to illogical scientific conclusions during its development of the 70-ppt advisory.

The New Jersey scientists recently proposed a 14 ppt limit for PFOA, following a decade of research on the contaminant, The Intelligencer previously reported. Vermont has a 20 ppt standard.

New Jersey scientists are not alone in questioning the federal approach to perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs). In a letter sent in August, “a pair of officials appointed by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo accused the EPA of causing confusion in its guidances regarding PFOA, which has been found in elevated levels in the Hoosick Falls drinking water and has been linked to cancer and other serious illnesses,” The Hill reported.

The EPA issued a in May about PFC exposure as various cities wage high-profile battles against the compounds. The EPA links high levels of PFC exposure “to low birth weights, forms of cancer and other health problems,” Colorado Public Radio reported.

For more on PFC issues visit Water Online’s Source Water Contamination Solutions Center.

New Trouble in Newburgh: Blood Tests for Cancer-Causing Chemicals Found in Tap Water: In May, after the EPA changed its recommended limit for a chemical called PFOS, Newburgh declared an emergency and shifted to a new water source

By Mary Esch

NBC Channel 4 News

Photo: A medical assistant draws blood from a patient that will be tested for PFOS levels in Newburgh. State officials recently launched an ambitious effort to offer blood tests to Newburgh's about 28,000 residents after the chemical PFOS — used for years in firefighting foam at the nearby military air base — was found in the city's drinking water reservoir at levels exceeding federal guidelines.

What to Know:

- New York State officials recently offered blood tests to all Newburgh residents after a cancer-causing chemical was found in their tap water
- PFOS, the chemical found in the water, has been linked to cancer, thyroid problems and other serious health issues
- PFOS can be found in firefighting foam, which is used at Newburgh's military air base

In this chronically struggling city along the Hudson River, residents beset by poverty, high crime and boarded-up homes now have an entirely new worry — that their tap water may have exposed them to a chemical linked to cancer.

State officials recently launched an ambitious effort to offer blood tests to Newburgh's 28,000 residents after the chemical PFOS — used for years in firefighting foam at the nearby military air base — was found in the city's drinking water reservoir at levels exceeding federal guidelines.

"The fact that I've been drinking that water for years, and my daughter's been drinking and bathing in it, that's shocking to me," says Stuart Sachs, an artist who moved here from Brooklyn 14 years ago. "My daughter is 11. What diseases is she going to have to look forward to? It's scary."

PFOS, or perfluorooctane sulfonate, has been linked to cancer, thyroid problems and other serious health issues. Results of the blood testing, expected to be released early next year, won't tell people whether they're actually at increased risk for any specific health problem, but will show how their exposure compares to others.

Similar testing has been done in several smaller communities with water contaminated with PFOS or its close chemical cousin, PFOA, which is used in nonstick and stain-repellent coatings.

About 1,500 people were tested near an air base in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and found to have slightly elevated levels of the chemicals. In the rural villages of Hoosick Falls and Petersburg, New York, where plastics plants are being held liable for PFOA in public and private wells, tests of about 3,000 residents that began in February have found PFOA blood levels as high as 500 times the national average.

For Newburgh, about an hour's drive north of New York City, a potential health crisis was the last thing it needed. The city, which served as George Washington's Revolutionary War headquarters, was humming with machine shops, clothing factories, shipyards and brickyards in the early 20th century.

But in the 1960s, a slow decline began after a new bridge over the Hudson River diverted traffic away from the city's commercial center. Factories started shutting down or moving to the new highway corridor outside the city. Now the city is notorious for derelict abandoned buildings, drug gangs and violent crime.

In 2014, PFOS was detected in 175-acre Lake Washington, the city's drinking water supply, at a level 170 parts per trillion, well below the 400 ppt limit then recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. When the EPA set a new level of 70 ppt for short-term exposure in May 2016, the city declared an emergency and shifted to a new water source.

New York's Department of Environmental Conservation has identified nearby Stewart Air National Guard Base as the source of the PFOS, suspecting the chemical, used for years in firefighting emergencies and drills, got into a stream leading to the city reservoir.

Free blood tests are being offered through Nov. 19 to any resident who makes an appointment at one of seven clinics. But getting people tested in Newburgh presents special challenges. More than a third of residents live in poverty and more than 46 percent of households speak a language other than English at home.

"Newburgh is a very poor city, and special recognition has to be given to the fact that people who are really struggling, really at the edge, are going to need extra help getting out, learning about it," says Sachs, whose sculpture studio is in one of Newburgh's most run-down and crime-ridden neighborhoods. "On my street, people have vaguely heard there was an issue with the water."

Newburgh resident Dorice Barnwell, who works as a medical case manager, says she knocked on doors in her own four-story apartment building and found nobody had heard about the blood-testing program, despite several public meetings and media reports. She says information should be sent home with schoolchildren and posted at street corners, on buses and in shopping centers.

"We need to get this information out at all levels to everyone," she says. "I personally sent out a mass phone text to everyone in my address book encouraging them to call the number to schedule an appointment."

Dr. Nathan Graber, director of the state health agency's Center for Environmental Health, says his department is translating materials into Spanish and Creole and engaging with the city's religious leaders, school superintendent and community groups to improve outreach.

Even though officials have stressed blood tests won't diagnose specific illnesses, some residents hope they will shed some light on nagging health worries.

Tamie Hollins says her 18-year-old son's sudden death in 2010 was attributed to natural causes, but now she wonders if PFOS had anything to do with it.

"I'm always thinking about this, trying to find answers about what happened to my baby," she says. "We were always very health-conscious and drank lots and lots of water, because water is life, right? Now I wonder about that."
